

# COVID-19 VACCINES FRAUD

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- **Part 1 – AWARENESS RAISING ON VACCINE FRAUD**



## Part 1 – AWARENESS RAISING ON COVID-19 FRAUD

- Since March 2020, OLAF is working with Member States and international partners in raising awareness and combatting fraud across the whole COVID-19 domain.
- Specifically on Vaccine Fraud, in December and January , **OLAF, Europol and the EUIPO** working together organised with the vaccine manufacturers a series of Webinars with the Member States on how to combat vaccine fraud.
- These webinars were attended by Police, Customs and Market Surveillance authorities from all over the EU.

- **PART 2 – FRAUD WITH VACCINE OFFERS**



## Part 2 – Fraud with vaccines offers, modus operandi:

- In February 2020, with the roll-out of the vaccines, the first large fraud trend appeared, OLAF began receiving information from many governmental sources about offers by intermediaries to sell large quantities of vaccines, mostly of the kind approved for use in the EU.
- This information was causing such uncertainty that on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 OLAF issued a public warning against these scams alerting that offers are fraudulent and do not provide access to real vaccines.
- In all the cases reported to OLAF, the offers have been made by so-called “intermediaries”.

## Part 2 – Fraud with vaccines offers, modus operandi:

- The aim of the fraudsters is to convince public authorities to make large down payments to secure purported sales, and to disappear with the money. In order to do so, fraudsters try to convey an image of legitimacy and hence use traditional means to contact authorities.
- By the end of February the fake offers of which OLAF has become aware amounts to over 1 BILLION vaccine doses for a total asking price of over EUR 14 BILLION.
- Member States will recall that this type of fraud scheme was also used last year in relation to face masks and other personal protective equipment that was in short supply at that time.

- **PART 3 – ALERTING AUTHORITIES ON SUSPICIOUS OFFERS**

## Part 3 – Red flags to alert authorities to suspicious offers

Building on the lessons learned in the past year, we can warn for caution especially (but not only) in the following situations:

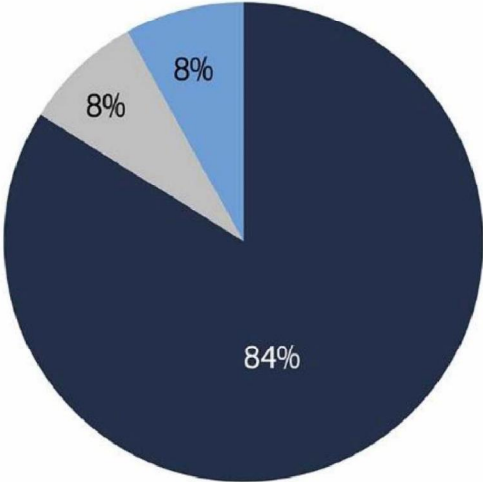
- Indirect offers of vaccines from **so-called intermediate suppliers** should be treated with great caution.
- If any offer requires paying a deposit, this should be treated with suspicion, the danger being that after such deposit is paid the fraudster pockets the money and just disappears.
- **Following its public warning on 15<sup>th</sup> February** , OLAF engaged in an intensive media campaign on the fake offers issue which received great interest from the media around the world. This certainly highlighted the dangers of what was going on and put many national authorities on their guard.



## Part 3 – Red flags to alert authorities to suspicious offers

- The offers are made to appear as being credible, but they do not stand the test of basic background checks on the companies and/or persons purporting to be such intermediaries.
- The best line of action, which OLAF advises, is to map these situations, establish their suspicious nature and share the information with OLAF and with our partners in the EU Member States and with Europol. OLAF has asked public authorities in the EU Member States to report any such offers of vaccines from intermediaries.
- In closing on this part of the presentation I would like to show the following graphs and tabular data which give a better overview of the nature of this particular fraud trend.

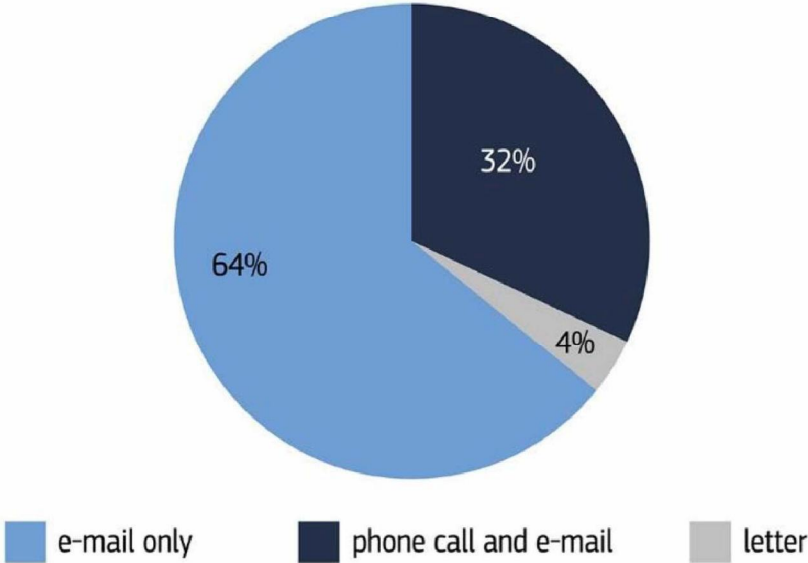
# OFFER MADE TO TYPE OF AUTHORITY



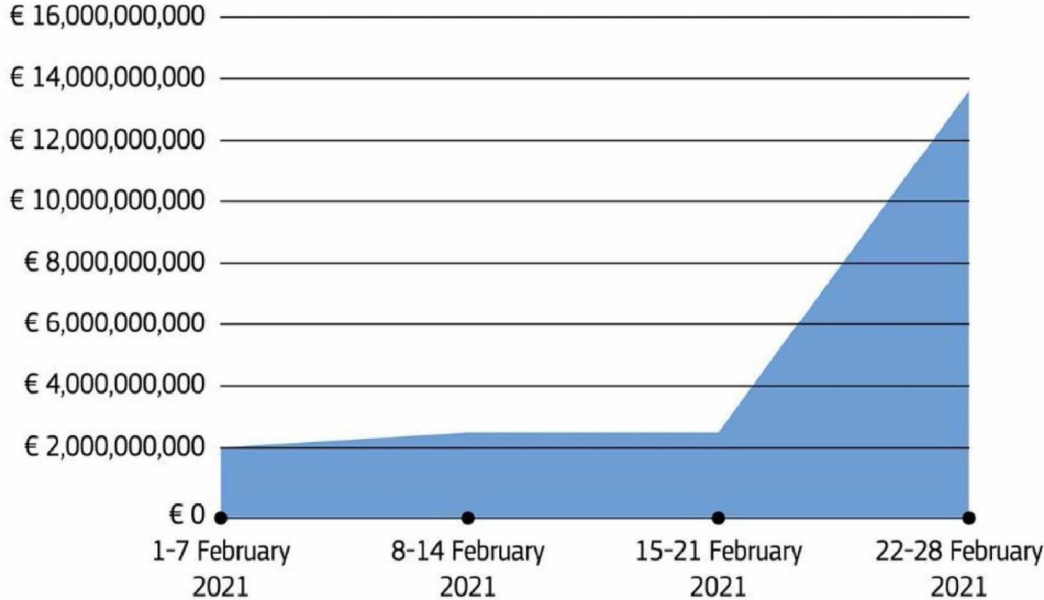
■ EU body      ■ national authority      ■ regional authority



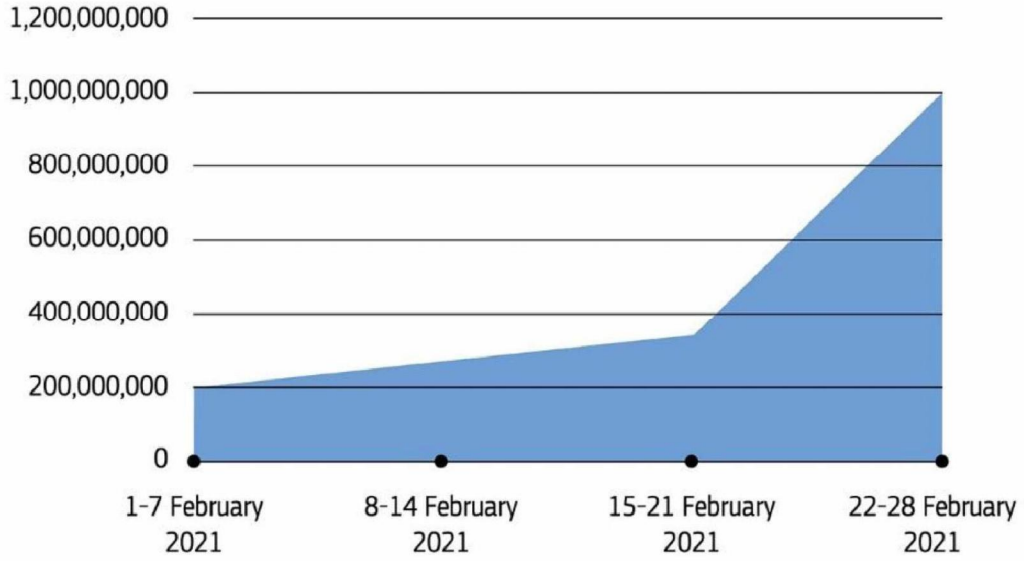
### TYPE OF APPROACH



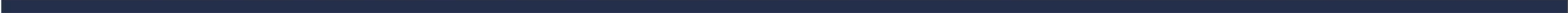
# EVOLUTION OF TOTAL ASKING PRICE



# EVOLUTION IN NUMBER OF OFFERED DOSES



**PART 4 – ONGOING / NEXT STEPS BY OLAF**



## Part 5 – Next steps

- OLAF will continue working closely with Commission services, vaccine manufacturers , Member States, Europol, EUIPO, EMA, and all our international partners in the fight against all forms of COVID-19 fraud.
- OLAF will continue to raise awareness on fake offers of vaccines.
- OLAF will work closely with the enforcement authorities in the Member States on follow up actions.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION  
**QUESTIONS?**

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